# AN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM A Gentleman in the Country, Relating to the Present Ministry, AND Men in Employments.

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AN

# ANSWER

TO A

# LETTER

FROM A

Gentleman in the Country,

Relating to the

# Present Ministry.

AND

Mr. [illegible]

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LONDON,

[illegible]

SIR,

YOUR Letter of the twelfth Instant finds me under the same Fears with your self, but not so deep in Despair; because I think it possible for a good King to mend Mal-Administration, tho not probable for a Nation so soon to return to that Power which has cost three Kingdoms so much Blood and Treasure to throw off.

Good men are too apt to fear Judgments, because they know we deserve them: This, give me leave to think, is your Case; but we ought not positively to determine any thing: That would be to measure Divine Providence by humane Conduct. I think the Rule of *Democrates* more agreeable to our present Circumstances, That whoever would live content, must propound to himself things possible, and submit to things present. Why may not we hope the King will change hands? and then we should not be so much disturbed with the present state of Affairs. But I come to the seven particulars, to which you desire my Answer.

*First, Whether I ever read in Story, Sacred or Profane, of such Frauds in the Management of the Treasure of any Nation?*

Secondly, *Whether there can be parallel'd in any Heathen, not to say Christian Government, such immoral, and profane Men in places of Power, and Trust?*

Thirdly, *Whether I have ever heard, in any Christian Government, of a Clergy that so tenderly handled the Sins of a Nation, and the Vices of great Men, as our Clergy in this Nation?*

Fourthly, *Whether this fault in our Clergy, and a greater Corruption in those we call the Whig, or Dissenting party, have not given our Enemies, the Church of Rome, greater matter of scandal against the Protestant Religion, than any thing that has happen'd since the Reformation?*

Fifthly, *Whether under our present Managment and Conduct, it may not be easy for the late King to return, and establish himself without a Forein Force?*

Sixthly, *Whether all these things being consider'd, it does not look as if God had left the Nation to a spirit of Delusion, to trust in Lies; that we may fall into the hands of Enemies, who design the extirpation of our Nation and Religion?*

Seventhly, *Whether a Government that neither rewards nor punishes, does not suppress Virtue, and encourage Vice?*

Here end your seven Queries, of which I shall give my Opinion, tho I am sure it cannot inform your better Judgment.

Your first Query is, *Whether I ever read in Story, Christian, or Heathen, of such Frauds in the Managment of the Treasure of any Nation?*

I must own I never did; And the reason may be, because we have nothing like our Constitution, and late Revolution in all its parts, in History. Such turns in State use to come with Force, and Arbitrary Power; and then Armies lived at Discretion: But our Change was with the vogue of the People, who thought no price too great for so happy a Deliverance.

The King who was in the Head of it, a Stranger to men as well as management in the Nation, could not bring Strangers into Offices and Employments, I mean such of our selves as had never been in Business before, but was of necessity forced to employ those he found in business of the State; and from such Plants as had been raised in the corrupt Soil of the late Reign, no very good Fruit could be expected; and their opportunity for Frauds was such, as perhaps no Age ever presented in former times. The Nation then went gradually step by step into Levies and Taxes, and there was time to take care of the Management: but now we were forced to leap into them with a running Jump, too much without Method or Controul; and that led our Managers, I verily believe, into greater Frauds, than even the wicked Spirit that guided them at first, foresaw. For how could it be imagined that the Spoil should be so great, that a Sweeper of an Office, of twenty pounds *per Annum* Stipend, should arrive in four Years to an Estate of six thousand Pounds? and Clerks in Offices of eighty Pounds *per Annum* Salary, to a Purchase of twenty thousand Pounds Sterling? And in this proportion it is said to go generally through all the Offices of the Kingdom. And this Management has been laid with so great Judgment, that the qualifications of a Person for an Employment were to have good Testimonials that he understood

derſtood the World; a ſoft Character for a Knave. And this is too notorious by the unanimous conſpiration of all in Employments, when the leaſt of them was attack'd: I need not name particulars, which are in every days Pamphlets, too much to the ſcandal of our Nation and Government: Pray God it may not be to the Ruin of both!

Thus you ſee I agree with your firſt Inquiry, as to Fact, tho not to the Inference you make, which I think to be too ſharp.

I end this Head with the words of a Heathen, which I think better Divinity than we practiſe in this Age, *viz.* That to keep our ſelves quiet in this World, we muſt aim at nothing that Men count worth wrangling for. It would be one good ſtep to a Reform, if Offices in the State were diſpoſed as they are in Corporations, as an Impoſition, to Men that have got Eſtates, to ſerve their Country, not to men of expectations to gain Eſtates by Offices: That is advancing the Waſp above the Bee.

We ſhould conſider the practice of our Neighbours, the *Dutch*, and there we ſhall find no Man in any place of Truſt that has his Fortune to make: and ſome tell us, that all the Civil Imployments in that Common-Wealth put together, amount not to the Sum that one Noble Lord, a Friend or otherwiſe to the Army, has raiſed out of his Imployment.

Your ſecond Enquiry is, *Whether there can be parallel'd in Heathen, much leſs Chriſtian Government, ſuch immoral and profane Men in Places of Power and Truſt?*

This Query gives ſuch a Latitude for anſwering, that I might eaſily prove the Affirmative; but then I muſt confeſs

confeſs that to make the Parallel I muſt go abroad; for I cannot find it in any Reign at home. But if we look into the Reaſon of this Misfortune, we ſhall find it the ſame we have juſt now given for the Frauds in our Managers of the Revenue: Did not the King find ſome of them in Imployments, even them you moſt complain of? Were not others of them early in aſſiſting the King in this Revolution? If we calmly reflected on this, we ſhould not believe theſe Men to be the King's choice, or entertain a thought that he ſupports them. A Body full of Hereditary Diſtempers, muſt undergo a courſe of Phyſick for Recovery: a violent Purge and Bleeding might endanger the whole. We have had ſuch great Proofs of the King's Wiſdom and Conduct, that me thinks we ſhould truſt him, and ſatisfy our ſelves with a Maxim of the Lord *Verulam*, *If you would make haſte, ſtay a while.* I differ with you, that the King loſes good Men by letting bad Men continue ſo long in Power. I cannot dive into the ſecrets of Princes, but to me ſeems great Policy for our King in our preſent Circumſtances, to let faulty Men be fully laid open to the People, before he removes them; and then they will not be able, as too often we have ſeen it, to make Parties among the People, when their faults have drove them out of the Court. I know you will ſay that the Men complained of have ſufficiently laid themſelves open, to the general Abhorrence of the Nation; and therefore the Reaſon before given is out of doors. It's true, and therefore I give it for the time paſt, hoping that the King by this time ſees the Tranſgreſſors are fully underſtood and known in the Nation, whoſe Eyes are on his Majeſty for Reformation in this matter, as a foundation for a righteous Government. *Scotta* was in the right

when

when he tells us, *It is an ill Age where Vice hath got a Reputation, and the Diſſolute have loſt the only good thing they had, the ſhame of offending.* This hath been too much our caſe, but you and I will hope very ſoon to ſee better times, and that the Enemies of our Government ſhall find themſelves expoſed for thoſe wicked and falſe Inſinuations whereby they would conceal their own Crimes.

Your third Query is, *Whether I have ever heard in any Chriſtian Government of a Clergy that ſo tenderly handled the Sins of a Nation, and the Vices of great Men, as our Clergy in this Reign?*

This Queſtion, I muſt needs ſay, is more ſurprizing than all the reſt: You ſeem at one ſtroke to wound the whole Body of the Clergy, in which I think you are to blame. And ſo far do I differ from you in this Remark on the Clergy, that on the contrary I think we never had a more learned and pious Clergy. None can deny this as to the Biſhops made in this Reign. What Age can you turn to, and ſhew where there has been more conſtant Preaching and inſtructing of Youth? When was there ſuch frequent preaching againſt leud and profane Converſation? Really, Sir, I fear you live in ſome ill Neighbourhood, or perhaps hear none but Court-Sermons; and there indeed Men too often flatter. A Biſhoprick or a Deanery, like Charity, hides a multitude of faults: But we don't ſee many of theſe Spaniel Tongue-pads preferred. And now, Sir, give me leave to tell you, among what ſort of Men it is my Lot to fall, and to hear preach; one is a Doctor famed for Learning and Piety, whom I heard deliver himſelf in a great Congregation in theſe words, *It is too often the fault of learned*

*Men*

*Men to flatter Princes, and we find the Translators of our Bible guilty in this matter, or they would not so grosly have erred in that where they translate*, Who saith to a King thou art wicked: *Whereas in the Hebrew it is*, Thou shalt say to a King thou art wicked; *that is*, said the Doctor, *if he be so he should be told of it*. And agreeable to this Doctrine, I think it to be the opinion of most good Men, that it is the Duty of our Clergy to reach those Sins of great Men in Government in their Pulpits, which they cannot come at in their Persons. And this may be done without personal Reflections, by declaiming against Things, not Men; and if our Clergy do not this as much as they ought, I fear it is our own fault. We generally cry down, and with good reason, Pulpit-Statesmen; and often run that truth beyond its bounds. I would not have dictated from a Pulpit, what Men should be advanced, or who disgraced; what Laws should be made, what abrogated: but I think it comes well from a Pulpit to tell us that a Prince cannot be well served, or a Nation preserved by such Ministers in the Government as make a mock of Sin, and hate and keep from Imployments all that pretend to Sobriety. These Wolves in Royal Clothing are the Vermin of a good Government; and yet these are the Reformers of our Age, that distinguish themselves by the name of Whigs, whom once we knew by their pretences to Religion and Property, but now they are Apostates to both. You may find some of them in every Commission in the Kingdom, and too many of them where such poisonous Plants should be pluck'd up by the Roots. It was the Observation of a good Man, That ill Ministers make ill Times, and ill Times continue and increase ill Ministers; and this seems to be our Misfortune.

Your fourth Query is, *Whether this fault in our Clergy, and a greater Corruption in those we call the Whig or Diſſenting Party, have not given our Enemies, the Church of Rome, greater matter of ſcandal againſt the Proteſtant Religion, than any thing that has happen'd ſince the Reformation?*

This is too plain to be denied, and our Miſcarriage too great a fault to excuſe.

That which I have made the Rule of my Faith, hath always been the Holy Scriptures; and of that Community which is govern'd by them, I chooſe to be a Member. Now that our Church (let miſtaken Friends or profeſt Enemies ſay what they can) began the Reformation with the greateſt Purity of Life, as well as Orthodoxy of Doctrine, none but they who ſupport their Church (if it be one) by denying their Members the liberty of their Senſes, can deny.

But in Controverſy, that Argument which every Underſtanding can comprehend will prevail moſt; and we have that on our ſide, which is a Reformation in Manners as well as Doctrine from the Romaniſts: and this will convert Heathens, when School-Controverſies might diſtract them. Should a Heathen ſee that our Doctrine and Church-Diſcipline oblige us to an holy, ſober, and religious Life, and that no Man is accounted ſuch among us that wants Morals; that our Religion and Church-Government admits of no indulgence for Sins, nor thinks any venial; but that plainneſs of Spirit, and integrity in all our Actions is the Badg of a Chriſtian: And if on the other hand the Romaniſts ſhould appear in their ſhapes, as teaching that there is no faith to be kept with a Heretick; that Lies, Oaths, and all manner of Vice may be diſpens'd with for promoting their Cauſe; and that they can forgive, nay ſaint a Criminal guilty of Sins

that

that Heathens abhor and never pardon: Were theſe things, I ſay, conſidered by Men that never heard of Chriſtianity, I think the Controverſy would eaſily be decided. For when we have ſaid all, *Morals* are the common Touch-ſtone that will prevail with Mankind.

And now I come to your moſt ſenſible part in this Queſtion; Whether our preſent Management in Publick Affairs by immoral Men doth not give the Enemies of our Religion and Nation advantages over us, they never had before? I muſt own in my opinion it does, and for this reaſon; becauſe that which procured us of the Reformation credit and eſteem in the World when we ſeparated from them, was, as I ſaid before, the Purity of our Doctrine; but that would not have been ſo well underſtood in the World, if it had not been accompanied with plain honeſt Morals between Man and Man. It was, if we believe Story, even in the Reign of *Edward* the Sixth, a Proverb among the Papiſts; *I am as ſure of my Contract, as if I had the word of a Heretick.* Now if we loſe the Character of Moraliſts, I fear we ſhall want the moſt powerful Perſwaſive that brings in Converts, and the beſt Antidote againſt Popiſh and Atheiſtical Deluſions.

I confeſs I am ſilenced when Papiſts and Jacobites compare the Miniſters of the late Reign with ours; but I tell them they are moſtly the ſame Men. Their return leaves me little to ſay, when they name our great Whigs Liberty and Property: Men that pretended to be Martyrs for the Religion and Laws in the late Reigns, but are now Deſerters of both. By this I confeſs we put Weapons into the hands of our Enemies to deſtroy us. What can we ſay in defence of our Church and Religion, when we are managed by them that hate the firſt, and ridicule the latter? Ask them what is their Religion, they tell you

they are Whigs: What are Whigs? Are they Prebyterians, Independents, *&c.*? No, they are no Meeters. What then? At laſt it comes only to this, they hate high Church-men, and would as an Expedient have none at all. And agreeable to their Profeſſion is their Practice, as leud as *Sodom*, and fraudulent as *Judea*. And our Misfortune is the common Miſery; for where their numbers are great, the whole Government lies under the blackeſt Character that ever this Nation bore.

This fourth Query of yours puts me upon a Review of the Chronicles and Annals of this Kingdom; and tho we find various Misfortunes, almoſt as many as Kings, yet among all we meet with none that bear any proportion to thoſe we are now under. Many Men and Families have been cut off according to the Power and Pleaſure of a prevailing Faction; but ſtill the Miniſtry and Men in publick Truſt were juſt to their own ſide. Revenues were not ſwallowed up by Managers, nor were any ſo hardy as to advocate for them that were but ſuſpected; inſomuch that I don't find above three Men in four hundred years before the late Reigns who were queſtioned for miſmanagement in publick Receipts, that went off without a Cenſure of another nature than Addreſſing. I fear ſuch tender handling doth not only encourage faulty Men at home, but renders us a decaying and loſt People abroad. I cannot ſee how we ſhall defend our ſelves againſt Foren Force, when we are conquer'd by home Frauds: and that which makes it look like a ſpreading Leproſy is, that thoſe whoſe Actions are ſo notorious in one Poſt that they cannot hold it, have only the Puniſhment of being removed to another, as ſoon as one can be found of the ſame Qualifications to ſucceed him; the natural Conſequence of which muſt be, that in a little

time

time their numbers will be too great to be call'd into question. It is indeed astonishing to see that so many Men of great Estates, and English Blood, should be so blind as not to perceive that if these things hold, the Nation is lost. I have bin so long on this fourth Query, that I have little room or time for the other three; so I shall end this with a Resolution of *Sweer*, and were I not an English-man, say to my Country as he did to Fortune, That *he would have nothing to do with it that repulsed* Cato, *and preferr'd* Vitellius.

Your fifth Query is, *Whether under our present Management and Conduct, it may not be easy for the late King to return, and establish himself without a forein Force?*

This Conceit smells of the Cask, and argues too much Fear, and too little Faith. I confess such Corruption, and ill Management as we are under, is always the fore-runner of a ruined State; and our Case seems almost desperate, when the greatest part of a Session is spent in hearing Complaints, Addresses, &c. against Mal-Administration. This opens the Eyes of the Nation, and it may be feared will break forth one way or other: But I cannot think any true English-man, however disobliged by this, or engaged by Favours of the late King, can ever have a Thought or Wish for his, or rather French-Tyranny. He must be degenerate to a Prodigy, that would turn Slave to the French; and he must have lost his Reason that frames an Idea of any thing else under the late King, who had he ever so good Inclinations, must act by the dictates of his French Master.

For these Reasons, I think it next to an impossibility for the late King to return without a Forein Force. All my fear is from our Distractions at home; for we cannot call them Divisions, Factions, and Parties, such as formerly were

were the cauſe of Wars and Calamities among us.

We are now under a Diſtemper that this Nation never heard of before; all for the King, (for ſo 'tis, if the Major comprehend the Minor) and none for the Miniſters. It will be the wonder of Ages to come, as it is the Torment of this, to ſee our ſelves ruined by a few Men that have no Intereſt or Party in the Nation. A pleaſant Gentleman the other Day ſaid, he believed that one Wherry would carry away all their Friends, if they were ſeparated from Employments. And there may be Reaſon to believe it, if we conſider their Politicks, which ſhew them to be at their laſt ſhifts, and like Teague, who running too faſt in a Race, had nothing to excuſe his fault, but that he run away with himſelf. So our Managers way of juſtifying themſelves, is to criminate the whole Nation. When they of the Church complain, then they are *Jacobites*; when Diſſenters find fault, they are for a *Common-wealth*: but this Charm that for ſome time deluded well meaning Men is ſeen through, and the Maſk thrown off. Arts and Stratagems in Government, in our Kingdoms, have not that effect they have among other Nations: We are a free People, and ſuch have not a ſlaviſh Underſtanding. The humour of the Engliſh Nation is like that of *Cato, who would not have it in the power of any Man to ſay he killed or ſaved* Cato. Engliſhmen will not endure to have it ſaid, that any Trick, or any ſet of Men have power to ſave or loſe *England*: They think themſelves ſafe by no other ways and means than thoſe of their Conſtitution in Church and State; and if they were duly obſerved, Muſhroom Projectors would not ſet up againſt Engliſh Oaks. The antient Nobility and Gentry of the Nation, were always the main ſupport of the Crown.

Your

Your *sixth Query*, is a desire of my Approbation to your Prediction; to which I can give no Answer, but if what you fear be true, it is an ill time to convert People, when they find both Advantage and Reputation in their Wickedness.

Your last Query is, *Whether a Government that neither rewards nor punishes, doth not suppress Virtue, and encourage Vice?*

No doubt it does; but I will answer your Question with another, Did you ever know corrupt Ministers punish themselves, or reward what they hate? Single Vices are curable by single Counsels, but a general Dissoluteness in Government is hardly overcome. I therefore think the King hath a more difficult work than delivering us from the known Enemies of our Laws and Religion. In that we joined; but so unhappy we are, that against the depravity of them that would be our Masters, we can do nothing, but must stand still and see it done by the King alone; if we speak out, we are Mutineers, and enemies to the Government.

*FINIS.*

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## *ADVERTISEMENT.*

A Letter to His most Excellent Majesty King *William* III. Shewing, I. The Original Foundation of the *English* Monarchy. II. The Means by which it was remov'd from that Foundation. III. The Expedients by which it has been supported since that Removal. IV. Its present Constitution, as to all its integral Parts. V. The best Means by which its Grandeur may be for ever maintain'd. Sold by *A. Baldwin*. Of whom may be had all the Pamphlets against a Standing Army.